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ABSTRACT

Vocational education does not create jobs, but rather is a force in readiness, meeting the demand for workers by the business-industrial complex. At the heart of the process of providing job opportunities to urban youth in Cleveland are the vocational teachers and teacher coordinators who have the primary responsibility for placement and followup. Besides technical advisory committees which, as representatives of the business-industrial complex, assist in opening doors to employment opportunities, various programs have been developed to help students make the transition from school to work: the job placement program, school-to-work linkage program, occupational work experience program, cooperative work experience program, and early job placement. Cooperative work experience programs have been found to be both popular and successful, with seventy percent of the students remaining with the work experience companies after graduation. Since sixty-nine percent of students in grades 11 and 12 enroll in vocational education programs, there is some assurance that minority groups, the economically disadvantaged, and the handicapped are involved. Thus, vocational education has achieved some success in assisting youth and adults in the transition from school to work; but in assisting them in establishing themselves as entrepreneurs, it has encountered several barriers: lack of investment capital, lack of business experience, and lack of a well-defined self concept on the part of the students. To maintain and ultimately increase the level of cooperation and involvement that vocational education programs have achieved with the community and the business-industrial complex, the programs must continue to communicate with, listen to, and respond to the world of work. (ELG)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ESTABLISHING SECONDARY STUDENTS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

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The phrase "Job Creation" is often misleading in the sense that jobs are not created. Jobs are there because of a need for services or for products. When the need disappears or changes, jobs phase out or are modified. If someone speaks of creating public service jobs to aid the unemployed, they are not in fact creating jobs--they are raising the priority of such jobs or are finding categorical funds to perform the specific task of putting money in peoples' pockets. These jobs were always there and include such tasks as raking leaves, cleaning streets and vacant lots, painting fire plugs, planting flowers and shrubs, and shoveling snow.

Vocational education is a force in readiness, a reaction to a demand. This demand may be immediate or a long-range projection. Depending on the flexibility and planning capabilities, the demand will be answered. Vocational education does not create jobs.

A job may be defined as a task or as a series of tasks required to provide the service or to produce the product. A single skill such as a drill press operator's or a series of multiple skills such as a tool and die maker's (at least, entry level) are products of our machine shop programs. When students are placed in a job situation, jobs are not being created--only job opportunities. Vocational education is fulfilling a demand by the business-industrial complex because they have a need to

provide a service or a product.

The vocational teachers/coordinators or job placement staff may well assist an employer in restructuring a job so that a vocational student may be employed either in a part-time or full-time position. The restructuring may provide for a more efficient operation. Thus, cost effectiveness is improved. The job, instead of being a series of complicated tasks, then becomes two or three jobs with each containing a less complicated series of related tasks.

The heart of the process of providing job opportunities for the youth of our large urban areas is the on-line staff, the vocational teachers and teacher coordinators. The superintendent and/or the director may establish the tone for the process, but it is then clearly up to the on-line staff to provide the experiences and support. The vocational staff, with their experience and life style and coupled with the shop or laboratory setting, provide a realistic world of work environment. In Ohio the vocational staff has the primary responsibility of placement and follow-up. They may do direct placement, placement through the Employment Service, or through the Job Placement Service Program in the schools.

Within a large urban system, students require a variety of methods in making the major transition from school to work. Some just need to be pointed in the correct direction, others need to be hand carried to an employment office with model employment applications completely filled out and in their pockets. Others require a job fair where potential employers come to their school--their turf. Yet other students feel more secure in getting into the swim of things on a gradual, part-time basis.

Employers have their own methods of acquiring the work force needed to keep them competitive in the present market. Entry level, in reality,

can mean: What is the employer's need? How does the quality of our product match that need? What are the conditions of the negotiated agreement between labor and management? The variety of levels is often awesome and, thus, frustrating to the student. Some vocational graduates go to work on the bull gang or labor crew and then bid on the skilled jobs as seniority is gained. Others go to work directly into the skilled labor force at top pay. Another group may elect to give up their vocational education and opt for an assembly line job for a number of factors.

To assist the students in making this transition, the large urban schools attempt to meet the needs of students and employers in a variety of ways.

The Job Placement Program, funded by Disadvantaged Pupil Personnel funds, provides a one-year program in Title I high schools, staffed by counselors and job advisors (para-professionals). Any student who has elected to go to work following high school may enroll. Average placement rate is 94% since 1968.

School-to-Work Linkage Program, funded by the U. S. Department of Labor, provides for 300 twelfth grade vocational students to enter a registered apprenticeship program in place of a standard cooperative work experience program during their last year in high school. Special emphasis is placed on women, minorities, and little-known apprenticeships.

Occupational Work Experience Program, funded by the Ohio Department of Education and designed for those students who may be early leavers. The participants are provided with a related instructional program tied in to the job they are working at part time. Students enrolled - 693.

Cooperative Work Experience Program, funded by the Ohio Department

of Education and designed to serve the students enrolled in any of the five major areas: Trade and Industry, Horticulture, Home Economics, Business, and Distributive. Students enrolled - 1,331.

Early Job Placement operates through the various vocational programs on an individual basis. Students are selected and placed by their respective vocational teachers. The students may work either part or full time, as their schedule permits.

Approximately 70% of the students in the cooperative work experience programs remain with the company that provided that experience after graduation. An interesting sidelight to these and to other efforts in assisting students to make the transition is that the cooperative work experience stations are still available year after year. In fact, they have been increasing to meet the demands.

Of the twelfth grade students enrolled in vocational education, some 24% are engaged in either a cooperative work experience or an occupational work experience program. Not included in this percentage are those students at other grade levels nor those participating in the Comprehensive Youth Services Program sponsored by CETA and operated by the Cleveland Public Schools. This program of work experience provides an opportunity to some 800 students during the school year and some 12,000 students during the summer. The summer operation utilizes the Technical-Vocational facilities and staff of the Cleveland Public Schools for specialized instructionand work experience. About 1,000 students are involved in this manner.

With some 69% of all eleventh and twelfth grade students enrolled in vocational education, there seems to be some assurance that members of the special populations are involved in the vocational programs. In a number

of cases, companies supporting the various cooperative programs employ the first minority, the first female in nontraditional role and/or the first handicapped individual. A special Vocational Exploration Program operated by the Metropolitan Cleveland Jobs Council with CETA funds, provides, through its cooperating companies, an exploratory experience to economically disadvantaged students during the summer. Special emphasis has been put on physically handicapped students. The companies, although hesitant at first, were enthusiastic at the end of summer. These initial contacts, providing they receive the support of the schools, become the bridge that encourages other members of the special populations to apply. In addition, potential employers receive the positive word from their participating counterparts. This, then, opens the doors to part of the special populations. To date the success rate of these ventures has been most gratifying.

In support of the vocational teachers, the large urban schools rely heavily on Technical Advisory committees. The committees represent a cross section of the business-industrial-labor community for each vocational program. At the present time, there are over 700 members serving and providing support in terms of teacher selection, equipment specifications, quality of supplies, course content, evaluation, physical layout, and reference material. In addition to the formal Technical Advisory committees, it has been found that each individual providing the one-on-one educational experience at the work site becomes a stand-alone Technical Advisor. All participating individuals and groups assist in opening the doors to employment opportunities.

Last year the some 2,392 students enrolled in the work experience programs earned $2,824,864.36. Of this, some $401,766.88 was deposited

in some form of savings accounts.

During the spring of 1977, the students in the work experience programs honored their employers through what is called the "Employer Appreciation Banquet." Each major vocational area planned and held its own banquet. The total employer attendance was 1,207 and the work experience student number was 1,550, with a guest list numbering some 601. As noted in looking at the figures, a large number of companies supported more than one work experience student.

There is no single best way to establish secondary students in business and industry. What is appropriate for one school district may not work in another. But it does stand to reason that a system must be designed, developed, implemented, operated, and modified as required to provide the transition from school to work.

The Technical-Vocational Division does very well in assisting youth and adults in making the transition from school to work in the business-industrial complex. But assisting youth or adults in establishing themselves as entrepreneurs is a far different story.

The major barrier appears to be the amount of money required for capital investment. Two other factors related to the challenge are business experience, or at least knowledge, and, of course, the level of self-concept as perceived by the graduate.

There have been some exceptions as there are in most stories. But it is noted that the development of graduates into small business operators is generally related to the field of endeavor and the capital required. Probably the greatest number in Cleveland's case come from and enter the field of horticulture. This occupational field lends itself to an easy start-up (lower capital investment) in such areas as florist/

greenhouse operation, landscaping, turf maintenance, and horticultural mechanics.

Home Economics has been able to assist the graduates in starting up businesses in such areas as catering, fabric service, drapery manufacturing, and tailoring. Most of these start in the home.

In the field of Distributive Education, we have found newly graduated persons starting out in small businesses such as independent sales representatives, shoe stores, and auto parts.

We as vocational educators/leaders need to provide increased support in terms of consumer economics, small business operations, and market research for our potential business operators.

What about the impact on the urban area of the graduates working? It is hard to determine exactly with the limited resources at our disposal. But it is known that a large part of the urban population is rather mobile. We tend to find that as income increases outward moves become rather common. This reaches a point in time when the income generated by a job or business leaves the urban centers and is soon being spent in the outlying districts of the cities. As time and money permit, the source moves to the areas surrounding the cities. Thus the impact in terms of consumer dollars being spent in the city moves to other areas.

The system must have the involvement of the business-industrial-labor complex, the community, and the staff. Supporting media exhibits such as flyers, TV spots, booklets, executive briefs, and news articles must be kept in circulation. Other public relations actions must be used to keep the target groups knowledgeable and include family nights, open houses, Technical Advisory committee meetings, and business-industrial tours, all at the vocational facilities. Staff membership in

professional and trade associations should be encouraged. Community based groups should be made a part of exchange memberships. These would include but not be limited to: Growth Association, CETA, Occupational Planning Commisssion, Apprenticeship Council, foundation committees, local government council, and others.

Remember, your system has a quality product for distribution. Communication is essential. Listen and respond to the requirements of the world of work.